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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

DIVISION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30

1939

Publication of this Document Approved by the Commission on Administration and Finance
400. 4-'40. D-99043.

Mass. Secretary of the Commonwealth
May 16, 1940

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DIVISION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING

20 Somerset St., Boston
November 30, 1939

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in General Court Assembled:

The Division of Metropolitan Planning herewith respectfully submits its annual report for the year ending November 30, 1939:

Last year, the Division in its annual report recommended a program of highway and parkway improvements for the Metropolitan District and that report together with the recommendations was printed as House Bill 63 of 1939. Plans and estimates of cost of these various projects are on file at the office of the Division.

Rapid Transit Studies

Owing to the congestion on Cambridge Street in Boston, at the point where the East Boston Tunnel incline emerges west of Bowdoin Square, the Division made a study of the situation and suggested the narrowing of the ramp by eliminating the northerly or westbound track. If this could be done, there would be provided at least one additional full lane for west-bound vehicular traffic thus equalizing the number of traffic lanes in either direction.

A further study of the Somerville rapid transit extension was made by the Division in accordance with Chapter 21 of the Resolves of 1939 and a special report thereon was printed as House Bill 2494 of 1939.

A new Metropolitan District transportation map showing railroad, rapid transit and bus routes is being prepared by the Division on a scale of 2000 feet to the inch.

Highway Studies

Many studies have been made this year of highway needs in the Metropolitan District including Boston, the heart of the District. Among the Boston studies are the following:

- A proposed highway loop around the downtown district which would involve the widening of Dover Street from Berkeley Street to Albany Street and the use of Atlantic Avenue, Cross Street and Merrimac Street either as an improved thoroughfare or as the site of the proposed elevated highway.
- The Blue Hills radial route through Dorchester and Roxbury to Albany Street, near Massachusetts Avenue.
- The Commonwealth Avenue—Cottage Farm Bridge intersection.

Among other studies in the District are included:

- A traffic circle at Powder House Square in Somerville (This was constructed during the year)
- Further study of the so-called New York route through Canton, Dedham, Westwood, Norwood and Walpole.
- The intersection of Reedsdale Road and Randolph Avenue in Milton.
- The traffic problem at Coolidge Corner in Brookline.

The improvement of Harvard Street in Medford.

The widening of the Old Colony Parkway.

The extension of the Middlesex Turnpike (The Lexington route versus the Arlington route—both routes were studied).

Parking

The parking problems which have such a vital influence on the highway situation and the economical and efficient movement of vehicles have been studied this year with much care and many suggestions and recommendations have been made for traffic relief from this standpoint.

Planning Bulletin

The Division started in January the publication of a bulletin varying in size from one to four pages and containing transportation and planning news, statistical data, activities of the Division and notices of hearings and conferences.

The mailing list of approximately 680 names includes the following within the Metropolitan District:

Mayors of Cities
Chairman of Selectmen of Towns
Members of Planning Boards
State Departments
City, Town and County Engineers
Chambers of Commerce
Newspapers
Senators and Representatives
Boston City Councillors
Other Planning Agencies.

Considerable interest has been shown in these bulletins, of which eight have been issued to date and requests for copies have come from planners, state libraries, etc. from Maine to California.

Legislative

At the request of legislative committees maps and charts have been prepared and studies and reports made on various subjects.

Sumner Tunnel

The Division has prepared and keeps up to date a chart showing graphically the complete record of tunnel traffic since the opening of the tunnel. This gives an interesting picture of the fluctuating traffic conditions as they are affected by the heavy summer travel and the lighter travel in the winter. A slow but healthy increase in the use of the tunnel is indicated. It would appear from this chart that the lows of winter might be levelled and the income of the tunnel materially increased if the proposed plan of changing the registration date of motor vehicles from January first to April first were adopted. It is probable also that the state's income from the gasoline tax would thereby be increased by a considerable amount.

Meetings With Local Planning Boards

The Division is making an effort to visit all the local planning boards in the cities and towns of the Metropolitan District in order to become better acquainted with them and their problems and to establish closer

relations with them. Members of the staff have visited several planning boards this year and hope to have the opportunity to meet with all during the ensuing year.

These meetings should be of mutual benefit to the Division and to the cities and towns as they lead to closer understanding of local and general traffic problems and traffic needs inasmuch as the experience and knowledge of the members of the planning boards is available to the Division in studying their local problems and the desire to assist in those local problems is demonstrated by the Division.

Maps

The maps of the Boston Metropolitan District, both on a scale of 800 feet to the inch and 2,000 feet to the inch have been revised and brought up to date.

Status of Rapid Transit, Highway and Parkway Construction in the Metropolitan District — Projects Completed and Under Construction

The Huntington Avenue subway, now under construction from Boylston Street at Exeter to a point west of Gainsborough Street, is progressing satisfactorily and will be completed early in 1941. This will not only clear Boylston Street and Huntington Avenue of trolley cars but also provide an underpass for motor vehicles at Massachusetts Avenue and it will be a very welcome and long-awaited improvement.

The new double-barrelled highway along the Neponset River is being extended to Milton Street East, near Readville.

The traffic circle at the intersection of Centre Street and West Roxbury Parkway was completed June 29.

A traffic circle has been constructed at the intersection of Old Colony Avenue and Preble Street, Boston.

The parkway improvement near Columbia Circle together with a cut-off connecting the Old Colony Parkway with the Strandway was opened on the third of June. This also furnishes a direct connection from Old Colony Avenue to the Parkway, bypassing the Circle and relieving it of congestion.

The traffic circle and overpass at the intersection of Memorial Drive and Cottage Farm Bridge in Cambridge was dedicated and opened to traffic November 29th. This is a very attractive and much needed improvement.

In the Blue Hills Reservation, the widening and reconstruction of Wampatuck Road is progressing and will be completed in 1940.

Changes in Personnel

The Board of the Division as now constituted consists of the following Commissioners:

James D. Henderson, *Chairman*
Eliot Wadsworth, *Vice-Chairman*
Frederick J. Mahony
Paul C. Ryan
John M. Whouley
William F. Rogers
Daniel P. McGillicuddy

As will be seen, the following changes were made during the year:

Mr. John M. Whouley was designated as the representative of the Department of Public Utilities to succeed Mr. Richard D. Grant on December 6, 1938;

Mr. Frederic H. Fay resigned on January 11, 1939, and Mr. Eliot Wadsworth was appointed by the Governor on March 8, to succeed Mr. Fay, and he was subsequently elected Vice Chairman.

Mr. Fay was a member of the Commission since 1929 and Vice Chairman for the last five years. He is missed for his long experience and ever-ready counsel and assistance, which made him a valuable member of the Board.

Mr. Henry I. Harriman has continued in his capacity as Director of Planning.

Statistics

Only the figures for the fiscal year ending November 30, 1939, are available at this time.

Massachusetts Registration For 1939

Pleasure Vehicles	960,956
Commercial Vehicles	121,126
Buses	4,841
Motorcycles	907
	1,087,830
Trailers	14,534
	1,102,364
Total Drivers Licenses issued	1,231,552
Total Taxable Gallons of Gasoline	711,895,309
This would indicate the receipts from the Gasoline Tax in Massachusetts for the year ending November 30, 1939, to be	$20,455,079.10.

These records show an all time high for registrations, licenses and gasoline consumption.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Appropriations and Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending November 30, 1939

Appropriation	$20,094.31
Expenditures	19,789.07
Balance reverted	$ 305.24

Financial Statement Verified.

Approved. Geo. E. Murphy, *Comptroller.*

Respectfully submitted,

DIVISION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING

By

James D. Henderson, *Chairman*
Eliot Wadsworth, *Vice Chairman*
Frederick J. Mahoney
Paul C. Ryan
John M. Whouley
William F. Rogers
Daniel P. McGillicuddy

Henry I. Harriman, *Director*